Key Findings from the Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults (CASOA)

*Overall Community Quality*:

* **Four in five** of Area IV’s older residents gave high ratings to the community as a place to live and would recommend the community to others.
* Services offered to older adults were considered “excellent” or “good” by **half** of older residents.
* Most residents had lived in the area more than 20 years and almost **9 in 10 seniors** planned to remain in the area throughout their retirement.
* Residents rated these aspects of the community similar to other older adults across the nation.

*Community and Belonging*:

* Almost **two-thirds** of respondents reported “excellent” or “good” overall feelings of safety and between 6% and 22% had experienced safety problems related to being a victim of crime, fraud, abuse or discrimination.
* About **half** of older residents rated the sense of community as “excellent” or “good”; similar ratings were provided for the AAA’s neighborliness and valuing of older residents.
* When compared to other communities in the U.S., older residents in Area IV’s service area provided **lower ratings** for sense of community, openness, safety and neighborliness than the national average and experienced problems at rates similar to the national average.
  + *Potential problems*:
    - Being a victim of crime
    - Being a victim of fraud or a scam
    - Being physically or emotionally abused
    - Being treated unfairly or discriminated against because of age

*Community Information*:

* **Half** survey respondents reported being “somewhat” or “very” informed about services and activities available to older adults, which was similar to reports from other communities in the U.S.
* About **two in five** older adults felt they had “excellent” or “good” information about resources for older adults and financial or legal planning services.
* About **three in five** respondents had problems knowing what services were available and half had problems feeling like their voice was heard in the community.
* While older residents felt less informed about the services available in 2017 compared to 2013, they felt there was an **increase in availability of financial and legal planning services** over the same period.
  + *Potential problems*:
    - Finding productive or meaningful activities to do
    - Feeling like their voice is heard in the community
    - Finding meaningful volunteer work
    - Not knowing what services are available to adults age 60 and older

*Productive Activities*:

* **Three-quarters** of older residents rated the volunteer opportunities in the community favorably and one-third participated in some kind of volunteer work, a volunteer rate lower than the national average.
* About **1 in 10 respondents had used a senior center in the community**, which was a lower use rate compared to the use in other communities.
* **Half** of seniors said that they had at least “minor” problems having interesting social events or activities to attend.
* **Three in five** older residents rated the recreation opportunities in the community as “excellent” or “good”; participation in recreational and personal enrichment activities tended to be lower in Western Indiana than in other communities.
* About **half** of older residents said they were caregivers; respondents averaged between 7 and 11 hours per week providing care for children, adults and older adults.
* About **one in five older** adults felt physically, emotionally or financially burdened by their caregiving.
* About **one-third** of older residents were still working full- or part-time in 2017, compared to one quarter who were still working in 2013; three in five respondents were fully retired.
* Ratings for employment opportunities increased between 2013 and 2017 and **fewer** elders reported problems with finding work in retirement and with building skills for paid or unpaid work during this same period.
* The value of paid (part- and full-time work) and unpaid (volunteering, providing care) contributions by older adults in Western Indiana totaled nearly **$930 million** in a 12-month period.
  + Potential problems:
    - Having enough money to meet daily expenses
    - Having enough money to pay property taxes
    - Dealing with legal issues
    - Building skills for paid or unpaid work
    - Dealing with financial planning issues
    - Having interesting social events or activities to attend
    - Performing regular activities including walking, eating and preparing meals
    - No longer being able to drive
    - Falling or injuring self in home
    - Feeling physically, emotionally, and financially burdened by providing care for another person

*Health and Wellness*:

* **Two-thirds** of older residents rated their overall physical health as “excellent” or “good.” Fitness opportunities and the availability of affordable quality physical health care received ratings **lower** than the national average.
* The most common physical health problems, cited by at least **three in five** respondents, included the respondents’ **own physical health and doing heavy or intense housework**.
* About **one in five** older residents felt there was “excellent” or “good” availability of mental health care in Western Indiana while **four in five** rated their overall mental health/emotional wellbeing as “excellent” or “good.”
* About **half** of seniors reported problems with feeling bored, about **two in five** had problems with feeling depressed, experiencing confusion or forgetfulness and dealing with the loss of a close family member or friend. The proportion of people experiencing these aspects of mental health in Western Indiana tended to be **similar** to other communities across the nation.
* Older residents reported **fewer** problems with aspects of health care in 2017 compared to 2013 in a number of areas including finding affordable health insurance, affording needed medications and getting needed oral health care. Still, about **one-quarter** Area IV’s older residents reported issues with getting needed care (i.e., medications, health, oral and vision).
* **One in five** respondents reported spending time in a hospital and almost **two in five** had fallen and injured themselves in the 12 months prior to the survey. Falls and hospitalizations in Western Indiana occurred at rates similar to other communities.
* Many older adults reported problems with aspects of independent living, including having problems with performing regular activities, including walking, eating and preparing meals (32%); no longer being able to drive (12%); or falling and injuring themselves in their homes (28%).
  + *Potential problems*:
    - Physical health issues
    - Issues with completing heavy and intense housework
    - Issues with maintaining the house and yard
    - Issues with staying physically fit and maintaining a healthy diet
    - Finding affordable healthcare
    - Getting needed health care
    - Affording needed medications
    - Having adequate information or dealing with public programs such as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid
    - Feeling depressed
    - Experiencing confusion or forgetfulness
    - Feeling lonely or isolated
    - Feeling bored
    - Dealing with loss of a close family member or friend

*Community Design and Land Use*:

* Over **three-quarters** of older residents rated their overall quality of life as “excellent” or “good,” and Area IV’s quality of life was rated **similar** to other communities in the U.S.
* A majority of respondents rated the ease of getting to the places they usually have to visit, ease of car travel and ease of walking positively; ease of travel by car was rated higher than the national average while other aspects of travel were similar.
* **Two in five** respondents felt they had good access to affordable quality housing and good variety of housing options.
* Some older adults experienced problems with having safe and affordable transportation available (23%) while others experienced problems with having housing to suit their needs (15%) or having enough food to eat (14%). Daily living problems in Western Indiana were similar to other communities across the nation.
  + Potential problems:
    - Having housing to suit needs
    - Having enough food to eat
    - Having safe and affordable transportation available